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ABSTRACT

One in a series of ten mini-manuals on office communication proofreading, this booklet for business and office students provides instruction in capitalization. Included are terminal and specific objectives, capitalization rules and related information, and tasks for practice. A test over the information presented concludes the manual. (Test answers are included in the teacher's manual for the series--CE 008 821.) (BM)

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Draw Me BIG

an office education
Mini-Manual
on CAPITALIZATION

New Mexico State Department of Education

UE 008 827

An Office Education Mini Curriculum Manual on
CAPITALIZATION

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What you'll find in this booklet

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THE POINT OF THIS BOOKLET
(i.e., Terminal Objective)

When you are able to show that you know – and can apply – all the rules given in this booklet for capitalization – that means, when you've studied the objectives, read the INFO pages carefuily, done the TASKS successfully, and gotten at least 85 per cent on the TEST at the end – you'll be able to capitalize correctly on almost any job you get.

OBJECTIVE
OEM6-2

SPECIFICALLY, WHAT YOU HAVE TO BE ABLE TO DO:
(i.e., Specific Objectives)

1. State the original purpose of capitalization.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of capitalization rules with names of people.
3. Select from a given list of capitalized words those that are incorrectly capitalized.
4. Select from a given paragraph these words which exemplify certain proper nouns whose initial letters should be capitalized.
5. Choose among given sentences including words denoting direction which utilize capitalization correctly.
6. Choose among given sentences, including names of deities and words that refer thereto, those that are correctly capitalized.
7. Indicate in a given paragraph involving words naming relationship which letters should be capitalized.

8. Indicate whether a given sentence concerning acronyms capitalization is true or false.
9. Select from given paragraphs involving quotations those words which do not employ correct capitalization.
10. Choose letters in given titles that are incorrectly capitalized.
11. Choose from given sentences involving colons those which are incorrect applications of capitalization rules.
12. Indicate whether a given sentence concerning capitalization in an outline is true or false.
13. Indicate whether a given sentence concerning organization rules for capitalization is true or false.

1st THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

The original purpose of capital letters was to emphasize a word.

And back in the old days, that's just what writers did – anywhere they wanted to. Even now the German language, for example, uses capitals to begin each noun. Here's what some writing looked like back when people used capitals all over the place in English – it's a quote from George Fox, written a little more than 300 years ago, entitled, "A Battle-Door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Singular and Plural."

> Do they not speak false English, false Latine, false Greek . . . and false to the other Tongues . . . that doth not speak *thou* to *one*, what ever he be, Father, Mother, King, or Judge; is he not a Novice and unmannerly and an Ideot and a Fool, that speaks *You* to *one*, which is not to be spoken to a *singular*, but to *many*? O Vulgar Professors and Teachers, that speaks Plural when they should Singular . . . Come you Priests and Professors, have you not learnt your Accidence?

As you see, when you try to emphasize everything you really emphasize nothing. That's why in modern English we have cut down on the use of capitals for emphasis – and now there are some pretty widely agreed upon rules for the use of capitals.

These rules are what follows in this book.

2nd THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize proper nouns such as the names of people.

- Use capitals for *Johnny; Rita; James Warren Green, Jr.; Marie Lane;* etc. (A few last names contain a short word, usually meaning "of" in some language, which may not be capitalized – check your source. Common examples: Diane *von* Furstenburg; James *di*Bella, Pieter Van *den* Camp, Ricardo *de*Anzi)

- Use capitals for titles in front of names, too: *Miss* Concepcion, *Mr.* Love, *Doctor* Paye, *Senator* Nickett, etc.

- But not for titles behind names: Smith, the *doctor;* Jones, the *mayor.*

- Since initials are merely the first letters of proper names, they are capitalized, too: *P.O.* Torrance, *W.G.* Hawkins

3rd THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Place names are proper nouns, so capitalize them, too.

- The meaning of "Places" includes *villages, towns, counties, cities, states, countries,* and *continents,* as well as *rivers, seas,* and other natural and constructed things.

  An exception: "earth" (unless in a listing of planets), "moon," "sun."

- Often adjectives made from place names are capitalized too. But some have been used so frequently that they're considered common nouns and aren't capitalized.

Usually capitalized	*Usually lower case*
Brussels sprouts	*derby* hat
Swiss chocolate	*venetian* blind
Russian dressing	*manila* envelope

4th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Don't forget— names of people and places aren't the only proper nouns. Capitalize ALL proper nouns.

Here are some examples of these other kinds of proper nouns:

- ORGANIZATIONS – *Kiwanis Club, Office Education Associaton, Presbyterian Church*
- RACES, NATIONALITIES, LANGUAGES – *Caucasian, Spanish, German, Oriental, Welsh, Negro* ("Black" is sometimes capitalized as the name of an ethnic group, "yellow," "white," or "brown" seldom are capitalized.)
- DAYS, MONTHS, HOLIDAYS – *Sunday, April, Labor Day*
- TRADE NAMES – *Hershey, Chevrolet, Kleenex*
- HISTORICAL PERIODS AND EVENTS – *Stone Age, Civil War, War of the Roses, Middle Ages*

5th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize directions only when they mean "place"; not when they mean "direction."

In other words, when a word like "SOUTH" means the southern part of the United States, it's really a proper noun, so you capitalize it. For example:

Phoenix is one of the largest cities in the *Southwest.*
I like New England better than the *South.*

But, when a word like "SOUTH" means the direction you're going in, or from which you came, it is not a proper noun, so you *don't* capitalize it. For example:

I live four blocks *south* of Jim's house.
She lives *southwest* of Phoenix.
Reno, Nevada, is really farther *west* than Los Angeles, California.

INFO
OEM6-10

6th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize the names of (and phrases and pronouns referring to) deities.

Again, as in the 2nd through the 5th rules, we're really repeating the rule that says you should capitalize all proper nouns. "Deities" are what people worship, so people make the names of deities proper nouns. The only thing that this rule says that is different is that these words are so proper that pronouns and other words that refer to them are considered to be proper nouns, too. So they get capitalized just as if they were the proper noun.

Here are some common examples:

God
Allah
The Prince of Peace
Buddhist
He
Him
She
Her

} (when they refer to a deity)

7th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize words referring to a family relationship when they are used alone or with a given name.

- Don't capitalize them when they are used with a possessive pronoun, such as *my, our, your, his,* etc., unless the given name is used, too.

- Here are some examples of correct capitalization:

  Aunt Mary and *Uncle Henry* took me into their home.

  Poor old *Mom* lost her fight in the traffic court.

  Dear old *Father* paid her fine.

- Some examples in which no capitalization is necessary:

  My aunt and *my uncle* adopted me.

  Our mother lost her argument with the judge.

  Her grandmother has bought a bicycle.

BUT NOTE: *Our Aunt Mary* is *our favorite aunt.*

8th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Acronyms are really initial letters and should be capitalized.

- The acronym for the Federal Bureau of Investigation is *FBI.* (Note that the word "of" is not included in the acronym.)

- Other examples: *CIA, USA, NATO* (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), *HEW* (Health, Education, and Welfare), *PTA.*

9th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize the first word in each sentence, whether or not it is a quotation.

- One of the main things a capital letter does in English is tell a reader, "You're starting a new sentence now."
- Examples of sentences beginning with a capital letter should not be necessary. You see them all the time. But here are some examples of sentences within quotation marks. The rule still holds, but sometimes with quotation marks it's harder to tell just where a sentence starts:

  "I hate vegetables," he said, "because they taste funny." (one sentence; see the comma after "said"?)

  "I hate vegetables," he said. "They taste funny." (two sentences; see the period after "said"?)

  Note that each new, complete sentence begins with a capital letter.
- Sometimes a single word or a short expression is equivalent to a sentence. The rule still applies; capitalize the first word.

  Love me?
  Sure.
  Really?
  No.

- If a complete sentence is set off by dashes or parentheses within another sentence, don't capitalize it (unless, of course, the first word is a proper noun or "I"). For example:

  Don't capitalize: *I want you to call Jeri Skinner (she's the public relations expert) when you arrive in town.*
  But capitalize: *I want you to call our public relations expert (Jeri Skinner is her name) when you're in town.*

10th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

In titles, capitalize all words except those used as articles, prepositions, or conjunctions – with a few exceptions.

WHAT ARE ARTICLES? The words, *a, an,* and *the* are ARTICLES.

WHAT ARE PREPOSITIONS? Words such as *of, by, for, to* (when not part of a verb infinitive, like "to be"), *with, in, about, beneath, over, under, from,* when they precede the noun they go with (i.e., when they are in a *pre*-position) are PREPOSITIONS.

th

WHAT ARE CONJUNCTIONS? Words such as *and, or, nor, and/or, but, because, as,* and *for,* that connect (con-join) independent clauses are CONJUNCTIONS.

Now, let's apply the rule. Here are some titles you might come across:

Gone with the Wind (a preposition and an article not capitalized)
How To Read a Book (only the article "a" not capitalized; "To," here, is part of the infinitive, "To Read," and is not a preposition)

All about Everything (the preposition, "about," is not capitalized here, BUT see exceptions on the next page)

THE EXCEPTIONS:

1. Capitalize articles, prepositions, or conjunctions when they are the first or last words of a title – for example:

Of Mice and Men	*To a Waterfowl*	*The Last Rose of Summer*
An Apple a Day	*A Day in the Sun*	*But Definitely (if a title)*
What Little Boys Are Made Of		

2. Capitalize long prepositions
(NOTE: Some people say capitalize the preposition that has more than four letters; others say more than five – find out what the policy is where you are!)
For example:

Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea
All About Everything (see opposite page)
Apples Underneath the Tree

3. In titles with two parts, separated by a colon or a dash, capitalize the first and last words of *each* part, no matter what kind of words they are. For example:

Abraham Lincoln: The War Years
What Are Little Girls Made Of – The Best
Roadways: An Essay on Transportation

11th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

Capitalize the first word of an independent clause after a colon.

- These are examples of what this rule means. Capitalize them.

  Franklin had this to say: "Fish and visitors stink after three days."

  Here is the key principle: Include departure dates as well as arrival dates on invitations.

- But there are exceptions. Don't capitalize after a colon if the clause simply spells out whatever the sentence said before the colon.

  The requirements are as follows: a clean suit, a new car, and a college degree. (not independent clause)

  There is one easy way to get a college degree: graduate from a college. (explains the idea before the colon)

- When the material following the colon begins on a new line, capitalize the individual items on separate lines. For example:

  You have three choices:

  a. A job.
  b. Welfare.
  c. Suicide.

12th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION

Capitalize the first word of each item in an outline.

- This rule holds even when the outline letter is a lower case one. For example:

I. Wind instruments
  A. Single reed
    1. Clarinet
      a. Alto
      b. Bass
    2. Saxophone
      a. Tenor
      b. Alto
  B. Double reed
    1. Oboe
      etc.

13th THING TO KNOW ABOUT CAPITALIZATION:

An organization may establish its own additional guides for capitalization.

- A common one is to type all book and article names in "all caps."

  So, instead of *Guide for Home Owners,* the title may be typed *GUIDE FOR HOME OWNERS.*

- Another is to capitalize company officer titles (even when it's not necessary – such as after a possessive pronoun like "our" or in an appositive after a name):

  "Jerold Zachery, Executive Director, announced today that . . .")

- When working in an organization, check with an experienced employee about capitalization practices there.

Tasks for Practice

TASK 1 – To Capitalize or (OR?) Not to (TO?) Capitalize

Circle the letters that should be capitalized. (Optional: In the blank(s) after each sentence write the number of the objective(s) that applies; some blanks may remain blank.)

1. I heard him say, "when I was in school I worked hard, mother." _____ _____
2. He went on to explain why he passed mathematics but not english. _____ _____
3. Now he wants to go to a school outside the southwest. _____ _____
4. He plans to live on vienna sausages. _____ _____
5. He will take his favorite books, of Human Bondage and Thurber: my Life and Times.
   _____ _____
6. His sister visited senator Charles Matthias last week. _____ _____
7. Matthias campaigned on three issues: book-burning, anti-chinese food, and boxer shorts.
   _____ _____
8. He also favored the un and nato. _____ _____
9. Remember this: it is always darkest just before it turns completely black. _____ _____
10. That's when the President (he is the only official who can do it) calls out the navy.
    _____ _____

TASK 2 – Current Newspaper Style

Recently many newspapers, especially the large city dailies, have gone to what they call a "down style." This means that such words as street, apartment, river, federal, etc. are not capitalized even when they are used with a proper noun. For example, they will print "402 Lincoln street," or "along the Mississippi river." The theory behind "down style" is that capital letters should be minimized becuase they interrupt the flow of reading.

Your task (should your instructor wish you to accept it) is to find examples of three different words which are capitalized (in one or more papers) and examples of the same words in lower case (in other papers). Copy the examples and show the sources.

The Test

For Objective 1– Briefly, what was the original purpose of capitalization?

For Objective 2 – Write your name here:

a. Other than habit, why did you capitalize the first letter of each word?

b. Titles are capitalized when the _____ a name but not when they _____ a name.

For Objective 3 – Circle the words that should *not* be capitalized in the list below (assume each word occurs within a sentence):

Oregon	Plaster of Paris	Caribbean Sea
London	Moon	Rio Grande
Mars	Glen Canyon Dam	Manila Envelope

For Objective 4 – This time, circle the words that should be capitalized:

I climbed into my oldsmobile and roared off down the street. The coke can on the floor rattled and I cursed my oriental heritage which caused me to hate rattling soda pop cans. "I'll never go to another meeting of the nipponese society," I told myself, "not in a month of sundays, praise buddha." The olds was still accelerating, and I found I wasn't happy living in the machine age – the accelerator was stuck wide open. Just before I hit the pan am airlines billboard, I thought to myself, "christmas won't be merry this year."

For Objective 5 – Check the sentences which include correct handling of directions:

_____ a. The tired soldier headed west from Omaha.
_____ b. The air had to be cleaner than in the east.
_____ c. Out in the west he could breathe freely.
_____ d. When he reached the Rockies, he turned South.
_____ e. He never reached the Pacific Northwest.

For Objective 6 – Check the sentences which include correct handling of deities:

_____ a. The ancient Greeks worshipped Zeus.
_____ b. They thought He was God of Gods.
_____ c. The Indians worshipped a less human god known as the Great Spirit.

For Objective 7 – Circle the letters that should be capitalized:

My mother inherited an easy chair from uncle Ekenezer. His brother had built it himself. Although mom liked the chair, she wanted a recliner like aunt Sue's. So she got dad's saw and sawed the chair in half. Now it reclines like my aunt's chair, but it won't stand upright unless we lean it against a wall.

For Objective 8 – True or False:

____ Acronyms should be capitalized.

For Objective 9 – Circle the *incorrect* usages:

Let's go to a fabric store," said Della, "my clothes make me sick." "Sure," replied Ozzie. "Why not?" So off they went; They talked all the way. They found a new fabric store (The old one had burned down) and went inside. Ten minutes later, they left the store. "Yuk!" said Della. "making your own clothes looks like hard work."

"I suppose you'd like me to buy you a whole new wardrobe," said Ozzie, "Even if I have to rob a bank to afford it."

"That would be nice," said Della.

For Objective 10 – Circle the letters that should not be capitalized:

House At Pooh Corner
As I Lay Dying
Around The World In Eighty Days
Troilus And Cressida: A Love Story
The Red And The Black
Objective – To Murder

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For Objective 11 – Circle the *incorrect* usages:

Here is the problem: apathy.

We sent this announcement: everyone worried about apathy should meet in the mall at noon today.

No one came; no one cared.

So we went out for lunch at a place where the menu reads as follows: Hamburgers, cheeseburger, Filet mignon, chop suey.

For Objective 12 – True or False:

___ Capitalize the first word of each item in an outline unless the letter preceding the word is a lower case one.

For Objective 13 – True or False:

___ An organization may establish some of its own guides for capitalization.